Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-7 (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) An e-mail message filtering method, comprising:

a security manager receiving an ~~encrypted~~ e-mail message from a remote server, e-mail message associated with at least one recipient identifier, the email message including signature data;

~~decrypting the email message in accordance with encryption data;~~

the security manager extracting the signature data from the e-mail message;

the security manager verifying the extracted signature data by accessing a signature verification server; and

the security manager ~~processing~~ transmitting the e-mail message to said at least one recipient identifier in ~~accordance with~~ response to at least one predetermined result of said verifying.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising employing an automated policy to determine whether the e-mail message signature should be verified.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising employing an automated policy to determine the requirements for verification of signature data.

11. (Original) An e-mail message transmission system, comprising:

means for receiving an e-mail message, the e-mail message including at least one recipient identifier;

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means for identifying a remote certificate server corresponding to a target e-mail server associated with said at least one recipient identifier;

means for querying said identified remote server for encryption data corresponding to the target e-mail server;

means for encrypting said e-mail message in accordance with said encryption data from said remote server; and

means for transmitting said encrypted e-mail message to said remote server.

12. (Original) The system of Claim 11, further comprising means for applying a security policy to the e-mail message, the security policy results employed by said means for identifying and said means for querying.

13. (Currently amended) A method for signing an e-mail message, comprising:

receiving an e-mail message by a security manager of an e-mail firewall;

the security manager determining if a signature is required for the received e-mail message by applying a signature policy;

retrieving a signing certificate for the message in response to said applying a signature policy by ~~applying~~ reference to a signature policy;

applying the retrieved signing certificate to the message; and

forwarding the message for further processing by the e-mail firewall.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13 wherein said determining if a signature is required for the message is by applying a first signature policy and said retrieving of a signature is by reference to a second signature policy.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 13 wherein said determining and said retrieving is by reference to applying of one signature policy.